

Technology Opportunity Program Meeting
September 26, 2002 – 11:30 a.m
USDA Service Center Building, Accomac, Virginia

Minutes

The Technology Opportunity Program meeting was held on September 26, 2002, 11:30 a.m. at the USDA Service Center Building, Accomac, Virginia. Present: Cynthia Wallop, Betty Parks, Jim Carey, Jim Belote, Evan Clements, Bryan Smith, Pauline Milbourne, Amy Betit, Frank Moore, Steven Furness, Margaruite Moore, Peggy Kellam, Jon Johnson and Carla Woods.

Mr. Jon Johnson, Extension Area Specialist, Technology Development gave a presentation on the Technology Opportunity Program (TOP). The goal of TOP is to increase the potential for a higher quality of life for rural Virginia. He explained to the group that nine counties, including Accomack and Northampton, have been selected to participate in this program. Locally, the communities of Onancock, Locust Mont and Horntown have been targeted. The focus of this program will be leadership training for citizens and leaders and technology training. Communities and civic groups will have the opportunity to develop a main website with assistance from the Electronic Village in Blacksburg. There will also be discussion forums, interactive calendars, interactive directories and public access points.

Mr. Johnson explained the Take Charge component of the program provides an analysis of the community, examines alternatives, and formulates strategies for technological and economic development. Each participating county will form a Technology Leadership Team (TLT) to address these issues. The TLT will schedule three countywide meetings and determine location, time and type of meeting that works best. Session one will address the following: where we are now, community identity, community strengths and community weaknesses. Session two will consist of planning for the future and exploring community economic development strategies. Session three will identify issues to reach the vision and determine next steps. The outcome of the three sessions will be a working vision statement, a consensus based critical issue inventory, proposed plan of action and a compiled report. Mr. Johnson indicated that timelines are included in the packet of information distributed at the beginning of the meeting.

Mr. Johnson indicated that recruitment of additional TLT members is important, and youth representation should be considered. Churches and Eastern Shore Community College students were suggested recruitment contacts. Members were asked to e-mail their suggestions to Pauline or Jon. Frank Moore suggested that members of the Technology Task Force Committee be invited to join the committee since much of the “visioning” work has been done by this group.

A training session was tentatively scheduled for November 18 or 20, 7 p.m. at Nandua High School. Jim Carey will check with Mr. Thomas regarding use of Nandua.

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Technology Leadership Team will be held on October 16, 5:30 p.m. at Nandua High School. Jim Carey will check with Mr. Thomas regarding school use on this date also. Agenda items will be as follows: (1) finalize plans for November training session, (2) develop ideas for setting up the Take Charge Programs (tentative January or February), and (3) review of strategic planning document compiled by the Technology Task Force Committee (Pauline will secure a copy from Northampton Extension).

Meeting adjourned at 1:50 p.m.